

Global warming is one of the biggest challenges of our times, and our nation's dependence on oil is nothing less than national security issue. Americans consume more than 20% of the world's oil, but own only 3% of global reserves. Our inherent need to import puts us at the mercy of foreign nations, and sometimes hostile nations. Furthermore, dramatic increases in price reveal, again and again, the danger of relying on petroleum to fuel our economy. It is imperative that we transition towards clean, renewable fuels that can be produced domestically.

Investment in Renewables

In my role on the House Committee on Appropriations, I have consistently pushed for greater funding for renewable energy. Renewable energy is a smart investment not just because it reduces carbon emissions, but also because it creates high-paying jobs and grows a burgeoning industry. Similarly, extending and expanding tax credits for renewable energy will shift our country towards cleaner, alternative sources and help families make the transition to energy-efficient cars and homes.

Green Building

As Chairman of the Transportation, Housing, Urban Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee of Appropriations, I am particularly cognizant of the promise and importance of green building. Buildings are responsible for almost 40 percent of U.S. energy consumption, and residential houses account for almost half of that consumption. In the 110th Congress, I authored and passed H.R. 2536, the HOPE VI Green Building and Technical Assistance Act, which requires that all new construction and renovation of HOPE VI housing conform to green building standards. From smart site planning to energy-efficient design, green housing reduces carbon emissions, fosters healthier environments, and even saves money. In fact, although green construction is slightly more expensive than traditional construction, studies show that savings on utilities alone more than compensate the initial cost increase. I see the HOPE VI Act as important step, but also a first step, in the right direction, and I will continue to seek opportunities to promote sustainable communities.

Fuel Prices

I recognize that when oil and gas prices are exceptionally high, consumers need relief. I oppose tax breaks for big oil as a means to ease the burden. Instead, I support targeted aid to those in need, such as the [Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program](#) (LIHEAP), which reimburses low-income families and seniors across the nation for their home heating costs. I also support expanding the [Weatherization Assistance Program](#), which hires certified contractors to complete weatherization work such as air sealing and attic insulation for low-income families. In terms of broader-based action to address gas prices, I have also signed on to bills to prevent gas gouging, enable the Justice Department to sue the organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) for price fixing, and address speculation in oil and gas markets.

Global Warming

I am a co-founder of the bipartisan Climate Change Caucus and the author of the Climate Stewardship Act, which was one of the original cap-and-trade bills for carbon emissions. Global warming is one of the issues closest to my heart. I see the coming years as a long-overdue opportunity to implement and fine-tune cap-and-trade proposals like the Climate Stewardship Act, which would set a ceiling on greenhouse gas emissions for a full range of sectors and enable trading of emissions to make going green profitable and foster innovation. Throughout the process, I will push for the most ambitious feasible goals in carbon reduction. The scientific evidence is in; the question is how to best confront the realities of global warming. Our nation needs a comprehensive energy strategy that addresses energy use and encourages conservation, and I am deeply committed to that work.